# Land at Symonds Farm, The Saxhams, Suffolk



Archaeological Evaluation Report



November 2016

Client: CgMs Consulting on behalf of Symonds Farm Power Ltd.

OA East Report No: 2001 OASIS No: oxfordar3-265411

NGR: TL 794 655



# Land at Symonds Farm, The Saxhams, Suffolk

Archaeological Evaluation

By Nicholas Cox BSc

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Report Date: November 2016

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Report Number: 2001

Site Name: Land at Symonds Farm, The Saxhams, Suffolk

HER Event No: ESF 24866

HER Invoice No: 9193114

Date of Works: October 2016

Client Name: CgMs Consulting on behalf of Symonds Farm Power Ltd.

Planning Ref: SE/14/1030

**Grid Ref:** TL 794 655

Site Code: SXL 034

Finance Code: XSFRIS 16

Receiving Body: SCC Stores

OASIS No: oxfordar3-265411

Prepared by: Nicholas Cox

Position: Archaeological Supervisor

Date: 31 October 2016

Checked by: Matt Brudenell

Position: Senior Project Manager Date: 8 November 2016

Signed: 8 November 2016

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#### Summary

On the 24th of October 2016 Oxford Archaeology East conducted an archaeological evaluation consisting of nine trial trenches on land at Symonds Farm, The Saxhams, near Risby, Suffolk (centred on TL 794 655).

The trenching revealed a single small pit of Early Bronze Age date in the south-west corner of the site. The pit yielded a small quantity of Early Bronze Age pottery and a single struck flint.

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#### 1 Introduction

#### 1.1 Location and scope of work

- 1.1.1 An archaeological evaluation was conducted by Oxford Archaeology East (OA East) on land at Symonds Farm, in the parish of The Saxhams on the southern side of the A14, Suffolk (TL 794 655; Fig. 1). The proposed development, which is for expansion of the existing anaerobic digestion facility at Symonds Farm, is located in a broader area of known prehistoric, Roman and medieval remains.
- 1.1.2 This archaeological evaluation was undertaken in accordance with a Brief issued by James Rolfe of the Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service (SCCAS; Planning Application SE/14/1030), and an approved Written Scheme of Investigation prepared by OA East (Wiseman and Brudenell 2016).
- 1.1.3 The work was designed to assist in defining the character and extent of any archaeological remains within the proposed redevelopment area, in accordance with the guidelines set out in *National Planning Policy Framework* (Department for Communities and Local Government March 2012). The results will enable decisions to be made by SCCAS, on behalf of the Local Planning Authority, with regard to the treatment of any archaeological remains found.
- 1.1.4 The site archive is currently held by OA East and will be deposited with the appropriate county stores in due course.

#### 1.2 Geology and topography

- 1.2.1 The site lies on agricultural land on a small plateau at 73m OD. To the north, the land slopes gently down to the A14 at Risby. South of the site, the land drops into a small valley (44m OD), cut by a stream (a tributary of the River Lark).
- 1.2.2 The sites lies on superficial geology deposits of chalky till, with outwash sands and gravels, silts and clays supporting chalky loam soils, averaging 0.3-0.5m in thickness. The bedrock geology consists of chalk of the Lewes Nodular Chalk Formation, Seaford Chalk Formation, Newhaven Chalk Formation and Culver Chalk Formation (British Geological Survey online map viewer <a href="http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html">http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html</a>).

# 1.3 Archaeological and historical background

The following background is based on information obtained from the Suffolk Historic Environment Record (SHER), and summarised in the Written Scheme of Investigation (Wiseman and Brudenell 2016) and a Heritage Statement prepared on behalf of the client (Josephs 2014). A map of HER record locations within 1km of the site is included in Fig.2.

#### **Prehistoric**

1.3.1 There is evidence for scattered prehistoric activity in the surrounding landscape. A single Neolithic leaf-shaped arrowhead was found c.1km north-east of the site (RBY 026), whilst small amounts of Iron Age pottery have been recovered c.1km to the north at an evaluation at Risby Business Park (RBY 034) and at Symonds Farm c. 850m to the west (SXG 033).

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1.3.2 Aerial photographs identified a number of undated (but probably prehistoric) features to the south-east of the site (SXG 013). These include a possible pit alignment between a curving trackway.

#### Roman

1.3.3 A number of Roman finds have been recorded in the wider area, including a Roman brooch in Risby, c. 1km to the north (RBY 018), and a brooch, coins and pottery c. 1km to the east (SXL 007). A scatter of Roman pottery, coins and brooches have also been found at Symonds Farm, c. 850m to the west during topsoil stripping (SXG 003). The only recorded Roman feature in the landscapes is a pit found during an archaeological evaluation on the south side of Risby, c. 1km north of the site (RBY 042).

#### Medieval

1.3.4 The historic core of the village of Risby lies *c*.1km to the north of the site (RBY 043), and is Anglo-Saxon in origin, recorded as a large settlement of 25 households in the Domesday Book. Medieval settlement features including 12th-14th century pits, gullies, and a well were recorded during an archaeological evaluation on the south side of Risby, *c*.1km north of the site (RBY 042). Medieval pottery and a pond feature were also found *c*.1km to the north at an evaluation at Risby Business Park (RBY 034).

#### Post-medieval and Modern

- 1.3.1 There are six listed buildings, all located *c*. 850-1000m from the site (DSF9358; 9106; 7615; 8547; 9677; 7620; 9443). All date from the late 16th to early 19th centuries. They include farmhouses, barns, a cottage and a coaching inn. A milestone is also recorded *c*. 500m the north (RBY 030).
- 1.3.2 Cartographic sources show other post-medieval structures and landscape features now gone from the area. The 1638 parish map of Little Saxham and Hodskinson's map of 1783 depicts a series of houses (SXL 017) and a tower-like building called The Shepards Watch (SXL 012) c. 600-900m west of the site. Cropmarks of a post-mediveal road/track have also been recorded c. 900m to the south-west, and are depicted on an estate map of 1597 (BRR 035). Running west from a point 350m south-east of the site was Marquis's Drive (SXL 024), a former 18th century carriage drive extending from lckworth Park to the south-east.
- 1.3.3 The Bury St Edmunds to Newmarket railway line runs 200m to the north of the site (SUF 071). The line was opened in 1854, with the former Saxham and Risby station located c. 500m to the north-east (SXL 023). North of the station was a former 19th century brickworks (RBY 040).

#### **Previous Archaeological Works**

- 1.3.4 In 2007 Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service carried out an evaluation at the Risby Business Park (ESF21436). This found two post-medieval ditches, a backfilled pond and finds of Iron Age and medieval pottery.
- 1.3.5 In 2011 Archaeological Solutions conducted an archaeological evaluation at Land South of School Road, on the south side of Risby village, *c*. 1km north of the site (ESF21436). This revealed a concentration of medieval and post-medieval features comprising, pits, gullies, ditches and a well.
- 1.3.6 A geophysical gradiometer survey was undertaken in 2013 by Stratascan on the field to the east of the site, which found no identifiable archaeological features (ESF24587).



# 1.4 Acknowledgements

1.4.1 The work was commissioned by CgMs Consulting on behalf of Symonds Farm Power Ltd. OA East would like to thank Mike Dawson of CgMs, and James Rolfe of Suffolk County Council. The machine was supplied by George Gittus & Sons Ltd. Fieldwork was conducted by the author with the assistance of Toby Knight; site survey was undertaken by Gareth Rees. The project was managed for OA East by Matt Brudenell. James Rolfe monitored the site on behalf of Suffolk County Council.

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#### 2 AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

#### 2.1 Aims

2.1.1 The objective of the evaluation was to determine as far as reasonably possible the presence/absence, location, nature, extent, date, quality, condition and significance of any surviving archaeological deposits within the development area.

#### 2.2 Methodology

- 2.2.1 Nine 30m long trenches were excavated across the proposed development area (Fig. 1), providing approximately a 5% sample of the *c*. 0.95ha site.
- 2.2.2 Machine excavation was carried out under constant archaeological supervision with a tracked 360-type excavator using a toothless ditching bucket.
- 2.2.3 The site survey was carried out using a Leica GS08 with SmartNet live correctional datafeed.
- 2.2.4 Spoil, exposed surfaces and features were scanned with a metal detector. All metaldetected and hand-collected finds were retained for inspection, other than those which were obviously modern.
- 2.2.5 All archaeological features and deposits were recorded using OA East's *pro-forma* sheets. Trench locations, plans and sections were recorded at appropriate scales and colour and monochrome photographs were taken of all relevant features and deposits.
- 2.2.6 Due to the sterile nature of the fill of the sole archaeological feature, no environmental samples were taken.
- 2.2.7 The site was generally dry and well-drained except at the northern end of Trench 5. Most of the site was a fallow field but the southern edge was very overgrown and partially covered by a large spoil bund which required several of the southern trenches to be moved northwards from their originally planned positions.

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#### 3 RESULTS

#### 3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 The trenches are discussed in three groups; Trenches 1-5, Trenches 7-9 and Trench 6. Trenches 1 to 5 formed a row across the northern half of the site, whilst Trenches 7 to 9 were in the south-east corner and were all affected by modern disturbance. Trench 6 was the only trench to contain archaeology, and is considered by itself. All trenches were 30m in length and 2m in width (Fig. 3).

#### 3.2 Trenches 1 to 5

- 3.2.1 Located in the north-west corner of the site, aligned north to south, Trench 1 was devoid of archaeology. A modern field drain ran across the trench north of the mid point. It revealed a dark orangey brown silty sand topsoil (1) which was 0.3m thick, overlying a 0.15m thick mid orangey brown silty sand subsoil (2) (Plate 1).
- 3.2.2 Trench 2 was located just west of Trench 1 and was aligned approximately east to west. The same field drain as in Trench 1 extended into the trench from the west and ran along its southern edge. A dark orangey brown silty sand topsoil (1) was revealed which was 0.4m thick and overlay a 0.2m-thick mid orangey brown silty sand subsoil (2) (Plate 2).
- 3.2.3 Immediately east of Trench 2 was located Trench 3, and this was aligned roughly north to south. The modern field drain crossed the trench at around the mid-point. The trench revealed a dark orangey brown silty sand topsoil (1) which was 0.3m thick, overlying a 0.1m thick mid orangey brown silty sand subsoil (2) (Plate 3).
- 3.2.4 Trench 4 was located to the west of Trench 3 and was aligned approximately east to west. It revealed a dark orangey brown silty sand topsoil (1) which was 0.4m thick, overlying a 0.2m thick mid orangey brown silty sand subsoil (2) (Plate 4).
- 3.2.5 In the north-east corner of the site, aligned north to south, was located Trench 5, which was devoid of archaeology. A modern field drain was recorded in the trench on an east to west alignment. The trench had a dark orangey brown silty sand topsoil (1) which was 0.35m thick, overlying a 0.20m thick mid orangey brown silty sand subsoil (2) (Plate 5).

#### 3.3 Trenches 7 to 9

- 3.3.1 Trench 7 was located to the south of Trenches 2 and 3 and was aligned east to west. The trench contained several plough scars and evidence of modern disturbance. It revealed a dark orangey brown silty sand topsoil (1) which was 0.5m thick, overlying a 0.15m thick mid orangey brown silty sand subsoil (2) (Plate 8).
- 3.3.2 Trench 8 was east of Trench 7, and was aligned approximately north to south. The trench contained several plough scars and evidence of modern disturbance. It revealed a dark orangey brown silty sand topsoil (1) which was 0.3m thick, overlying a 0.2m thick mid orangey brown silty sand subsoil (2) (Plate 9).
- 3.3.3 In the south-east corner of the site was located Trench 9, aligned approximately east to west. The trench contained three modern features containing glass and late 20th century ceramic building material. A dark orangey brown silty sand topsoil (1) was revealed which was 0.5m thick, overlying a 0.1m thick mid orangey brown silty sand subsoil (2) (Plate 10).

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#### 3.4 Trench 6

- 3.4.1 Trench 6 (Plate 6) was located in the south-west corner of the site and was aligned approximately north to south. The trench contained a small pit (4), 0.8m wide and 0.3m in depth, with a U-shaped profile (Fig.3 Section 1; Plate 7). The pit was fully excavated and was filled by a sterile mid brownish grey silty sand (5) which produced a single struck flint and six sherds of pottery of probable Early Bronze Age date.
- 3.4.2 The trench revealed a dark orangey brown silty sand topsoil (1) which was 0.3m thick, overlying a 0.2m thick mid orangey brown silty sand subsoil (2).

#### 3.5 Finds Summary

3.5.1 A single struck flint waste flake and six fragments of Early Bronze Age pottery were recovered from the fill (5) of pit **4** (Appendix B.1 and B.2).

## 3.6 Environmental Summary

3.6.1 No environmental remains were recovered from the site.

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#### 4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

#### 4.1 Conclusion

- 4.1.1 The evaluation revealed a single, small Early Bronze Age pit in Trench 6, located in the south-west corner of the site. The remaining trenches were devoid of archaeological features, finds and deposits, with Trenches 7-9 revealing evidence of modern disturbance.
- 4.1.2 No Bronze Age remains have previously been recorded in the vicinity of the site, although the pottery recovered from the single pit in Trench 6 shows some similarities to vessels recovered from barrows excavated in the parish of Risby to the north.

#### 4.2 Recommendations

4.2.1 Recommendations for any future work based upon this report will be made by the County Archaeology Office.

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# APPENDIX A. TRENCH DESCRIPTIONS AND CONTEXT INVENTORY

Trench 1						
General de	scription		Orientation	N-S		
Trench dev	oid of arch	naeology	Avg. depth (m)	0.47		
the trench.			Width (m)	2.00		
sand.			Length (m)	30.00		
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
1	Layer	-	0.30	Topsoil	-	-
2	Layer	-	0.15	Subsoil	-	-
3	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-
Trench 2						
General de	scription				Orientation	E-W
Trench dev	oid of arch	aeology	A modern	field drain ran along the	Avg. depth (m)	0.47
trench. Con				verlying a natural of silty	Width (m)	2.00
sand.					Length (m)	
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
1	Layer	-	0.40	Topsoil	-	-
2	Layer	-	0.20	Subsoil	-	-
3	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-
Trench 3						
General de	scription				Orientation	N-S
Trench dev	oid of arch	aeology	A modern	field drain ran across the	Avg. depth (m)	0.40
trench. Con				verlying a natural of silty	Width (m)	2.00
sand.					Length (m)	30.00
Contexts						1
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
1	Layer	-	0.30	Topsoil	-	-
2	Layer	-	0.10	Subsoil	-	-
3	Layer	_				

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Trench 4						
General de	escription		Orientation	E-W		
			Avg. depth	(m) 0.50		
Trench dev overlying a			of topsoil and subsoil	Width (m)	2.00	
overlying a	naturai oi	Silly Saliu			Length (m)	30.00
Contexts						1
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
1	Layer	-	0.40	Topsoil	-	-
2	Layer	-	0.20	Subsoil	-	-
3	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-
Trench 5					·	
General de	escription				Orientation	N-S
Trench dev	roid of arch	naeology	A modern	field drain ran across the	Avg. depth	(m) 0.42
				erlying a natural of silty	Width (m)	2.00
sand.					Length (m)	30.00
Contexts						1
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
1	Layer	-	0.35	Topsoil	-	-
2	Layer	-	0.20	Subsoil	-	-
3	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-
Trench 6		_	_			
General de	escription				Orientation	N-S
					Avg. depth	( <b>m</b> ) 0.45
				ric pit. Consists of topsoil	Width (m)	2.00
and subsoi	roverlying	a naturai	or silly sa	na.	Length (m)	30.00
Contexts						
context	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
1	Layer	-	0.30	Topsoil	-	-
2	Layer	-	0.20	Subsoil	-	-
3	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-
4	Cut	0.80	0.30	Pit	-	
5	Fill	-	0.30	Pit Fill	Pottery, flint	Early Bronze Age

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Trench 7								
General de	scription			Orientation	E-'	E-W		
			Avg. depth	(m) 0.4	13			
Trench dev overlying a			Width (m)	2.0	00			
overlying a	natural of	Sifty Saria	Length (m)	30	.00			
Contexts					1			
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date	date	
1	Layer	-	0.50	Topsoil	-	-		
2	Layer	-	0.15	Subsoil	-	-		
3	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-		
Trench 8								
General de	scription				Orientation	N-	S	
					Avg. depth	<b>(m)</b> 0.4	12	
Trench con overlying a				sists of topsoil and subsoil	Width (m)	2.0	00	
overlying a	natural of	Sifty Saria	•		Length (m)		.00	
Contexts								
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date		
1	Layer	-	0.30	Topsoil	-	-		
2	Layer	-	0.20	Subsoil	-	-		
3	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-		
Trench 9								
General de	scription				Orientation	E-'	W	
_					Avg. depth	(m) 0.5	50	
Trench con subsoil ove				ures. Consists of topsoil and	Width (m)	2.0	00	
3003011 0 0 0	nying a ne	iturai oi si	ity Saria.		Length (m)		.00	
Contexts						,		
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date		
1	Layer	-	0.50	Topsoil	-	-		
2	Layer	-	0.10	Subsoil	-	-		
3	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-		

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#### APPENDIX B. FINDS REPORTS

#### B.1 Flint

By Anthony Haskins

B.1.1 The single flint recovered from the fill (5) of pit 4 is struck from a good quality semi-translucent flint with a thick chalky cortex. The single 'Janus' flake has been used to remove the bulb of percussion from a larger flake. The fresh state of the flint would suggest that it is contemporary with the Early Bronze Age pottery recovered from the pit.

## **B.2 Pottery**

By Sarah Percival

- B.2.1 A total of six chunky sherds weighing 83g and all from a single vessel were collected from fill 5 of pit 4, in Trench 6. The sherds are made of a dense sandy fabric with common sub-angular grog up to 4mm and moderate irregular voids representing where an inclusion, perhaps chalk or similar, has been lost. The sherds are from the base of medium sized, probably Early Bronze Age vessel but are otherwise not further identifiable.
- B.2.2 Several barrows excavated in the parish of Risby have produced comparable vessels. A Collared Urn from the primary grave of a tumulus from Barrow Bottom is of similar grog-tempered fabric (Martin 1976, 56; Longworth 1984, corpus no. 1516) and further antiquarian excavations of barrows on Poor's Heath also produced urn sherds in grog and chalk tempered fabrics (Longworth 1984, corpus nos. 1514 and 1517). It is possible that the sherds found here represent displaced accessory vessels.

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# APPENDIX D. OASIS REPORT FORM

All fields are required unless they are not applicable.

Project De	etails										
OASIS Num	nber	er oxfordar3-265411									
Project Nam	ne E	Evaluation at Symond's Farm, Risby, Suffolk									
Project Dates (fieldwork) Start				24-10-2016		Finish 24-10-2016					
Previous W	ork (by 0	OA Ea	ist)	No			Future	Work N	No		
Project Refe	erence (	Codes	S			,		,	·		
Site Code	SXL 034 Plann			Plannii	ng App. No.			14/1030			
HER No.	ESF24866 F			Relate	d HER/	OASIS N	lo.				
Type of Pro	iect/Tec	hniqu	ies Use	d	•						
Prompt			nning cond								
Developmen	t Type	Othe	er								
Please sel	ect all	techi	niques	used:					'		
Aerial Photo	ography - i	interpre	etation	Grab-Sa	mpling			Rei	mote Operated Vehicle Survey		
Aerial Photo	ography - ı	new		Gravity-C	Core			X Sar			
Annotated S	Sketch			Laser Sc	Laser Scanning			Sur	☐ Survey/Recording Of Fabric/Structure		
Augering				Measure	d Survey	Targeted Trenches			geted Trenches		
☐ Dendrochro	nological	Survey		X Metal De	etectors	Test Pits			st Pits		
☐ Documenta	ry Search			Phospha	te Survey	y Topographic Survey			oographic Survey		
Environmer	ntal Sampl	ing		Photogra	☐ Photogrammetric Survey			Vib	☐ Vibro-core		
☐ Fieldwalking	g							Vis	ual Inspection (Initial Site Visit)		
Geophysica	al Survey			Rectified	Photogra	phy					
List feature typ Thesaurus	es using tl	he NN with the	IR Mon eir respect	nds & Their ument Type ive periods. If n	e Thesa	I <b>Urus</b> ar /finds wei					
Monument			Period			Object			Period		
Pit			Bronze A	Age -2.5k to -700		Vessel			Bronze Age -2.5k to -700		
			Select p	eriod		Flint			Bronze Age -2.5k to -700		
			Select p	eriod					Select period		
Project Lo	ocatio	n									
County Suffolk					Site Ad	dress (in	cluding	postcode if possible)			
District St Edmundsbury				New		Symond's Farm Newmarket Road Risby					
Parish The Saxhams							Edmunds				
HER	Suffolk										
Study Area 0.95 ha						Nationa	al Grid R	eferenc	e <sub>TL 794 655</sub>		



Project	t Origi	inators
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Project Origii	nators								
Organisation		OA EAST	-						
Project Brief Originator		James R	James Rolfe						
Project Design C	Matt Bruc	Matt Brudenell & Rob Wiseman							
Project Manager		Matt Bruc	lenell						
Supervisor		Nicholas	Сох						
Project Archi	ves						,		
Physical Archive			Digital A	Archive		Paper Arch	ive		
SCC Stores			OA East			SCC Stores			
SXL 034			SXL 034			SXL 034			
Archive Content	ts/Media								
	Physical Contents	Digital Contents	Paper Contents		Digital Me	dia	Paper Media		
Animal Bones					□ Database		Aerial Photos		
Ceramics	X		□ □ GIS						
Environmental					Geophysics		Correspondence		
Glass							Diary		
Human Bones						IS	Drawing		
Industrial					☐ Moving Im	nage	Manuscript		
Leather					Spreadshe		☐ Map		
Metal							Matrices		
Stratigraphic				∑ Text			Microfilm		
Survey					Virtual Re	ality	Misc.		
Textiles						•	Research/Notes		
Wood							Photos		
Worked Bone							⊠ Plans		
Worked Stone/Lithic	$\times$						Report		
None		$\overline{\times}$	$\times$				⊠ Sections		
Other							Survey		
Notes:				1					

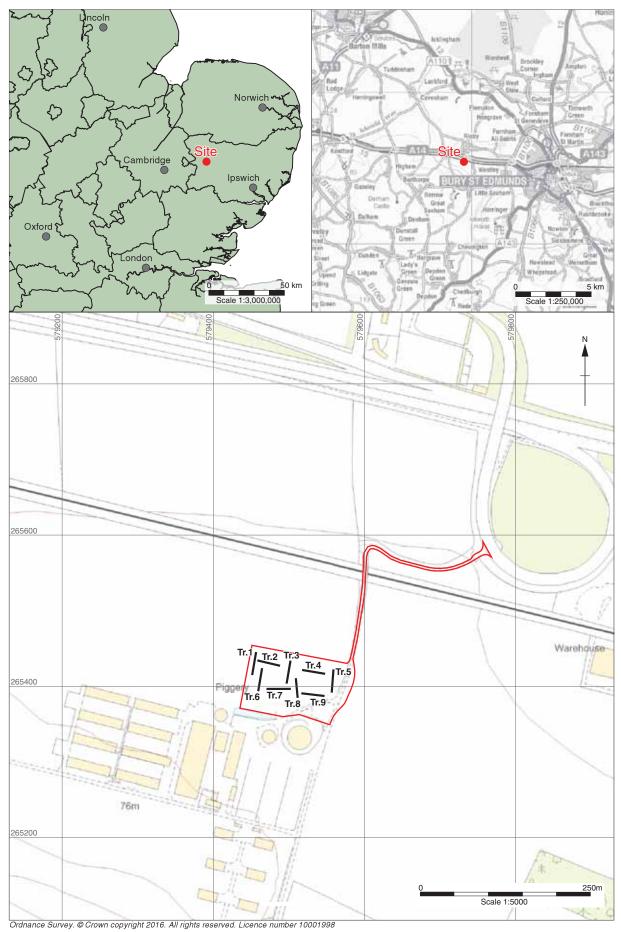
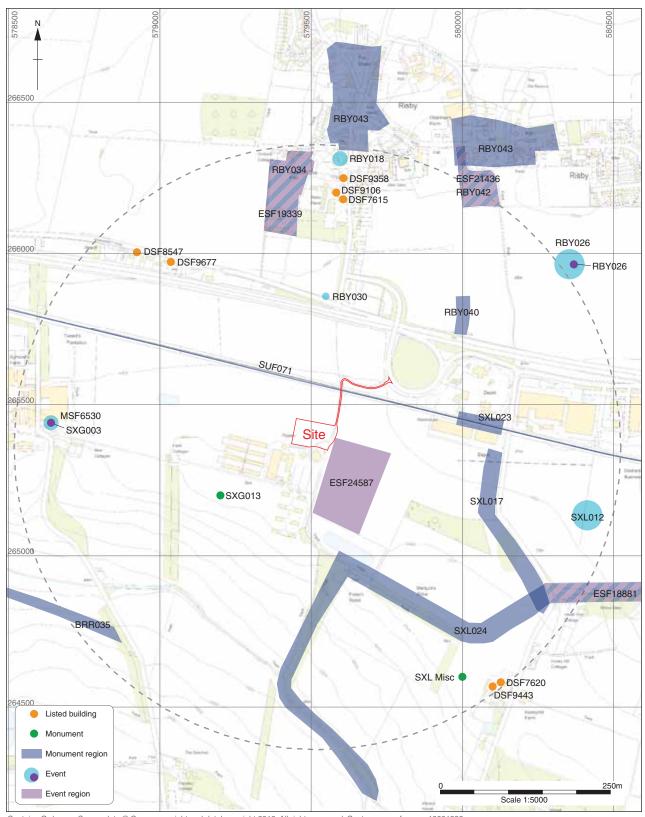


Figure 1: Site location map showing trenches (black) with a development area (red)



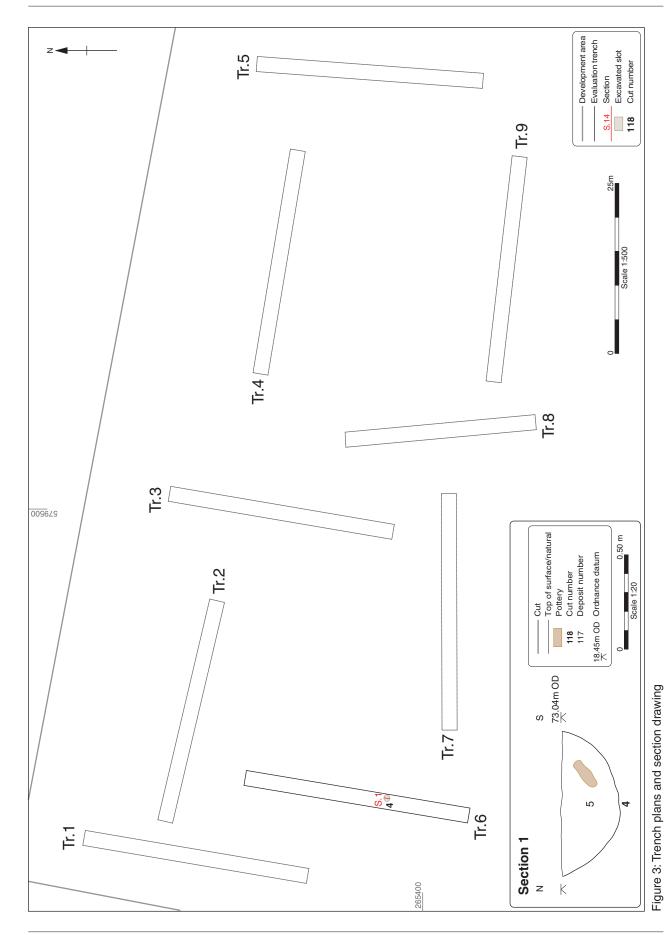


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Figure 2: HER entries within 1 km radius from the site

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Plate 1: Trench 1, looking north



Plate 2: Trench 2, looking east





Plate 3: Trench 3, looking north



Plate 4: Trench 4, looking west





Plate 5: Trench 5, looking south



Plate 6: Trench 6, looking south





Plate 7: Trench 6, pit 4, looking east



Plate 8: Trench 7, looking east





Plate 9: Trench 8, looking south



Plate 10: Trench 9, looking west



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